



# CommuniQUÉ

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 1

## RETIRED GENERAL'S VISIT MARKS BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT INS



*Joint INS,  
Public Health Team  
takes home a  
Hammer Award*



*San Francisco makes waiting part of the fun*

# HEADQUARTERS *News*



## *A clean audit for Finance Office wins AG's praise at farewell visit*

“ I have always been impressed with the dedication and hard work of the INS staff,” she said. “I am particularly proud of your audit accomplishment, it is truly a demonstration of teamwork and commitment.” ”

Former Attorney General Janet Reno paid a final official visit to INS Headquarters on her next to last day in office to congratulate the staff of the Office of Financial Management for attaining an unqualified, or clean, audit opinion from the Department of Justice Inspector General.

The ceremony on Jan. 18, which drew 150 financial management staff members from as far away as California, struck a tone of mutual admiration. Ms. Reno praised the INS staff in her remarks and was herself congratulated by dozens of INS staff who stayed after the event to personally extend their best wishes.

Of the clean audit report, Ms. Reno said, “This is an extraordinary accomplishment that enhances public credibility by providing the taxpayers with sound, accurate financial information.”

“I have always been impressed with the dedication and hard work of the INS staff,” she said. “I am particularly proud of your audit accomplishment, it is truly a demonstration of teamwork and commitment.”

The clean audit opinion for the 2000 fiscal year was particularly noteworthy given the fast expansion of the INS budget and staff in recent years and the increased complexity of the agency's funding sources, said INS Acting Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh, who introduced Reno.

The report brings the agency into compliance with financial laws and regulations enacted over the last 10 years. “There is still much work to be done to ensure all aspects of our financial

management system are fully integrated with our operating requirements,” Wyrsh said.

Just three years ago, the Inspector General had found the agency's financial balance sheet “unauditable,” primarily due to outmoded business practices and antiquated financial management system computer software that could not be adapted to the agency's rapid growth. As a result of an agency-wide effort, the INS received a steadily upgraded audit opinions in subsequent years, culminating with the unqualified opinion for last fiscal year.

Acting Commissioner Wyrsh presented Ms. Reno with a replica of the Statue of Liberty. Following the ceremony Reno posed for photographs with all 150 employees of the Office of Financial Management. She waded into a crowd of several dozen INS staff members who had stayed to congratulate the outgoing attorney general. Clearly enjoying the opportunity to mingle with staff, Reno graciously acceded to every request for an autograph or to pose for photographs with staff members.

In her address to the gathering, she noted her priorities for retirement were: kayaking in the Everglades and driving her red pickup truck across America.

Judy R. Harrison, Director of Financial Operations, provided the opening remarks for the ceremony. Annie Lopez, Deputy Director, Property and Accounts Payable and Patrick A. Martinez, Director of Financial Reports, Analysis and Policy, also spoke during the ceremony.



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From horseback to all-terrain vehicles, former Attorney General Janet Reno avidly sampled the modes of transport used by Border Patrol agents in the Southwest border region. Reno met hundreds of INS staff during a four-day tour in December that took her to Douglas, Tucson, Wellton, and Yuma in Arizona; plus Brownsville, Harlingen and El Paso in Texas.

# HEADQUARTERS *News*

“ I’m proud not only of what we have achieved, providing better service at less cost, but how we achieved this with INS and other federal agencies working together to improve government service,

Mary Ann Wyrsh,

Acting INS Commissioner.

”

## Joint INS-Public Health team cited for improving service, cutting costs

An inter-agency team that brought about huge cost savings and improved health care services for INS detainees was honored with a Hammer Award as one of former Vice President Al Gore's last official acts before leaving office in January.

The Managed Care Team comprises staff from the Custody Operations division of the INS Office of Detention and Removal and the Immigration Health Services (IHS) division of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The Hammer Award honors outstanding efforts of federal employees and teams to improve the quality and reduce the costs of government services. This most recent selection brings to 14 the number of Hammer Awards that INS staff has won since 1994.

The INS-PHS Managed Care Team was praised for achieving a multi-million-dollar savings by developing uniform standards for the delivery of health care services to an expanding population of INS detainees. Since the program's inception in 1997 the cost savings have been conservatively estimated at \$17.5 million.

### Working Together

"I'm proud not only of what we have achieved, providing better service at less cost, but how we

achieved this with INS and other federal agencies working together to improve government service," said Mary Ann Wyrsh, Acting INS Commissioner.

The INS Office of Detention and Removal is responsible for providing health care services for detainees held at INS service processing centers, or SPCs. The total number of detainees, who are either awaiting deportation or who are not eligible for release into the community, averages about 20,000 persons.

Health care services are managed directly by the INS at nine SPCs that house 5,000 detainees. Services for the remaining 15,000 detainees, who are held at seven other SPCs and at 225 local jails throughout the country, are provided under contracts with health care providers.

"A local jail just isn't equipped, in many cases, to address the health needs of this population," said Ruben Cortina, Director of the Custody Operations division of the INS Office of Detention and Removal.

Many jails dealt with the detainee's medical problems by escorting them to local physicians or hospitals for treatment and passing the resulting bills back to the INS, Cortina said. Such arrangements were vulnerable to waste, fraud and abuse.

With no centralized procedures in place for medical reviews or accounting for costs, "we had no information on what was happening,"



Tim Doran, a representative of the National Performance Review, Dr. Marilyn H. Gaston, Bureau of Primary Health Care, HHS



Acting INS Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh, Dr. GERALYN Johnson, Dr. Gaston,

Cortina said. "We only knew our expenses were skyrocketing."

### Quality Care

Even worse, high costs did not necessarily purchase high-quality care. Many detainees, who were at greater risk than the general population of contracting an infectious disease, were not being screened for routine ailments, as specified by public health policy. At the other end of the spectrum, a local jail might run up a bill by providing the detainee every medical service he or she requested.

So, the Office of Detention and Removal took the extraordinary step of delegating to the IHS full authority to manage the health care services for detainees. The Managed Care Team was charged with implementing a five-step program to regain control over health care expenditures.

It was a medical crisis -- the alarming emergence of a drug-resistant strain of tuberculosis five years ago -- that sparked an initial discussion among various law enforcement agencies to work cooperatively on the problem. The Managed Care Team expanded on this issue to tackle the larger issue of controlling costs. They eventually set out for local jailers guidelines for the medical care of INS detainees in their custody.

### Cost Effectiveness

"The health services program that resulted from the Managed Care Team's proposals is quality-driven, accessible and cost-effective", said Gene Magliaccio, IHS Director. "The prescribed remedies simply reflected good basic principles of managed care and a commitment to the health of individuals in their (the Managed Care Team's) charge."

The system relies, much like many private medical insurance plans, on a group of third-party administrators to achieve nationwide compliance with service guidelines. These outside firms process and pay bills and also maintain a network of preferred providers, or hospitals and specialists that contractually agree to pre-set fees for specified services and to permit medical reviews of individual

cases. Firms are also tasked to contract health professionals in response to occasional staffing shortages at detention facilities.

Facilities are now required to obtain pre-approval for most major, non-emergency, medical procedures for detainees. A team of 10 managed-care coordinators with nursing backgrounds serve as "primary gatekeepers." They review treatment requests for detainees from doctors and other health care providers nationwide.

### Headache Relief

Another welcome side effect of the task force's efforts, according to Cortina, is that the Custody Operations staff has been relieved of a major headache for choosing health care providers.

Efforts to reduce detainee health care costs was also helped by the recent passage of an amendment to U.S. Code 18 (Sec. 4006), requiring that federal payments for medical procedures not exceed the rates allowed for payments under the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The change has had a tremendous impact on holding down health care costs, according to Captain Nina Dozoretz of IHS.

The IHS was recently handed the task of managing medical services for detainees who are briefly held by the U.S. Border Patrol, before being voluntarily transported back across the border. The Border Patrol deals with about 200,000 such "turnarounds" a year, or an average of 550 illegal entrants per day, some of whom are in need of immediate medical assistance.

The Managed Care Team's cooperative success may be due in part to a long working relationship between the INS and the Public Health Service, an exemplary partnership that goes back more than a century. When the INS was established to manage a rising flow of immigrants to America, the PHS provided health screening of the new arrivals. That expertise harkens back to one the PHS's earliest assigned duties of the 1800s: screening sailors and ship passengers for communicable diseases.



Acting Commissioner Wyrsh, Ruben Cortina, Director of Custody Operations, Office of Detention and Removal, Dr. Gaston



Acting Commissioner Wyrsh, Dr. Ada Rivera, PHS, Dr. Gaston



Dr. Rivera, Capt. Nina Dozoretz, IHS, Acting Commissioner Wyrsh, Ruben Cortina, IHS, Dr. Eugene Magliaccio, Dr. Gaston, Liz Herskovitz, Dr. Johnson, Dave Venturella, Tim Doran



# INS NEWS *of Note*

## **Inspector's assistance saves a traveler's life**

Early on in his 13-year INS career, Supervisory Inspector Jim King learned the importance of being ever-attentive to details. Last June 9, he acted on a detail that helped save the life of a decorated Korean War veteran.

Pausing to help the man locate a connecting flight at the San Francisco International Airport, King noticed that the traveler, Ron Rosser of Roseville, Ohio, appeared pale, possibly ill. Rosser had just completed a 14-hour flight from Seoul, where he attended a war-related 50th anniversary ceremony.

Despite Rosser's protestations that he was "just fine," King walked with him on the hunch that the traveler might soon need help. Rosser reached the departure area with a concerned King in tow. The two men continued to talk and King made sure to jot down Rosser's home telephone number, just in case he still might need to contact the man's family.

King stepped away, but said that just moments later something told him to check again on his new acquaintance. He returned to find that a crowd had gathered around Rosser, who was by then showing classic symptoms of a heart attack. King calmly asked airline personnel to summon paramedics, backing up the request by having a passenger also call in the emergency on the airport's courtesy telephone.

Help arrived within minutes and Rosser was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors said that any delay could have proven fatal.

However, King's good deed was not yet complete. With Rosser's home telephone number in hand, he dispatched Inspector Ruth Avictia to the hospital to check on Mr. Rosser's condition. The patient's wife, Sandy Rosser, back home in Ohio, was soon reassured by King's telephone call that her husband's condition had stabilized.

She flew to San Francisco the next day, where King met her flight, drove her to the hospital and also reserved lodging for her at a nearby hotel. At King's request, Inspector Larry Mak checked in on Mr. and Mrs. Rosser the following day. Mr. Rosser was treated with angioplasty and, after being discharged, he and his wife insisted on meeting King once again for a group photo and to express thanks before flying home to Ohio.

"People call my husband a hero," Sandy Rosser wrote in a letter to San Francisco District Director Charles DeMore. "But now Jim King is on the top of my list for heroism," She also thanked Inspectors Mak and Avictia.

Without King's involvement, "I'd certainly have died that day," her husband said. "I call him my guardian angel."

"It's something that I would want somebody to do for me under the same circumstances," King said. "My Glynco training paid off."

## **Halt to Salvadoran removals aids earthquake recovery**

**WASHINGTON** - The INS announced Jan. 18 it had temporarily suspended removal of Salvadoran nationals present in the United States. This action was taken

to assist the Salvadoran government in recovering from the devastating earthquake in El Salvador.

The temporary suspension of removals will remain in effect until the United States determines that El Salvador is able to accept its nationals once again.

The Salvadoran government has made a request to the United States government to consider Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Salvadorans currently residing in the United States. The Attorney General, after consultation with INS and the Department of State, will evaluate the request and make a final decision.

As of January 3, 2001, INS estimates that approximately 1,100 Salvadorans were in INS custody awaiting repatriation to El Salvador.

# INS NEWS FROM the Field

## Miami District's Most wanted list packs a message: Don't Hide Here

by Patricia Mancha

Criminal aliens on the run have a new reason to give wide berth to the state of Florida. A new "Top 10 Most Wanted" list of alien fugitives who are thought to be in Florida is being circulated among law enforcement agencies.

The 11-month-old program, a brainchild of the Miami District Investigations Unit, is already credited with putting five criminal aliens behind bars. Four persons were arrested based on information carried on the circulars. One criminal turned himself in to immigration authorities the day after an acquaintance told him that his case had been profiled on a local television news program.

Selection for the Top 10 list starts with names submitted by special agents of the INS investigations unit, who draw on their own case files and also on contacts with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. District Director Robert A. Wallis makes the final cuts, based on such factors as the fugitives' relative danger to the public, the seriousness of their crimes and their record of eluding capture.

Copies of the Top 10 list are posted in INS waiting rooms and sent to police agencies statewide. In

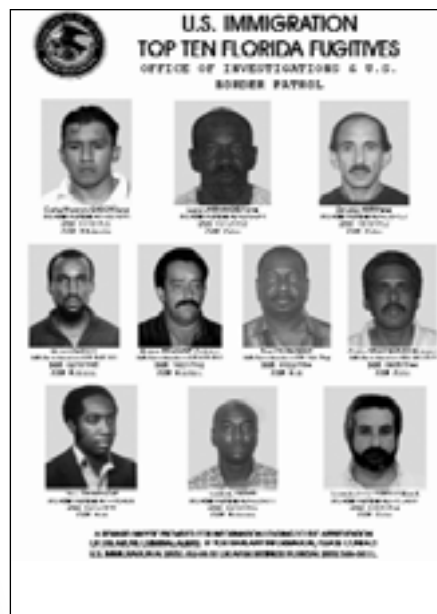
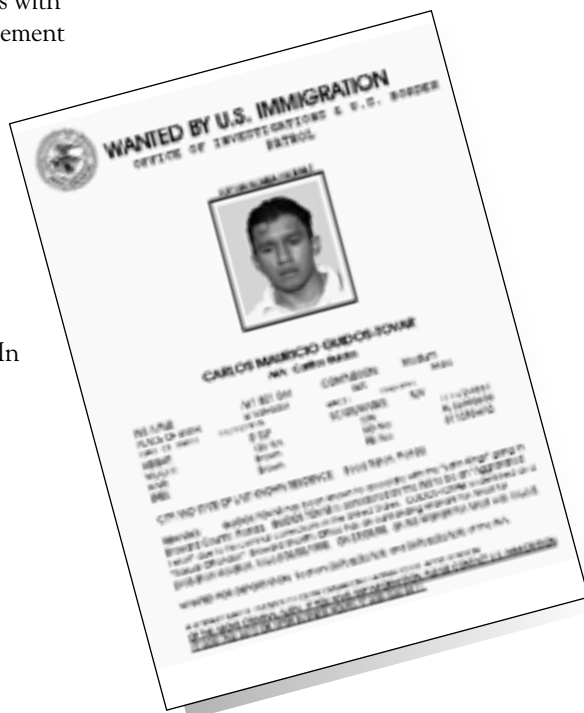
addition, the Miami District turns the spotlight on one of the 10 fugitives each month to drum up media coverage and public interest in locating the individual. Posters placed in INS waiting rooms have produced the best results.

Crimes committed by aliens now on the list range from sexual assault on a minor, attempted murder, carrying a concealed weapon to armed assault. The list is updated whenever a listed fugitive is apprehended.

The program is modeled after the national television program, America's Most Wanted, which describes fugitives who have been charged or convicted of serious crimes. All of those listed on the Florida Most Wanted list have been convicted of aggravated felonies. Most are free only because the

state courts that prosecuted their cases were unaware that the felony conviction would change the individual's immigration status.

A version of the television show seemed to be particularly appropriate for Florida's highly mobile population, a factor which can aid a fugitive's attempts to assimilate into a community, said James Goldman, Assistant District Director for Investigations. Other districts and sectors within the INS have contacted the Miami District for assistance in starting similar programs.



## Toll Free Customer Service Rings its first birthday

The nationwide toll-free telephone service of the INS National Customer Service Center (NCSC) marked its first anniversary in December, having logged more than 8 million calls since its inception.

A network of four nationwide call centers responds to INS customer queries about immigration services and benefits and helps to direct requests for local information to the appropriate offices. A typical business day finds the NCSC staff handling calls from between 35,000 and 50,000 INS customers who dial 1-800-375-5283.

In its first year, the NCSC expanded nationwide the toll-free service and separate lines for use by the hearing impaired. It also extended the services provided by telephone. INS customers can now, for example, order forms using the automated menu options. N-400 Naturalization applicants can register address changes.

These improvements to customer service and benefit processing were the basis for a Commissioner's Challenge Award granted last year to the NCSC and the N-400 Change-of-Address Team.

### New NCSC Services

The NCSC has worked closely with local INS offices to coordinate its screening of customer requests that the NCSC finds it is unable to handle. Such queries and requests are directed to local INS offices in an almost seamless process for INS customers. Such requests include N-400 address changes in cases where the customer is scheduled for an appointment; emergency re-scheduling of appointments; and for information on the status of a specific case outside normal processing times. These services make up the NCSC's Referral Services Program. Since October 1999, the NCSC has handled more than 69,000 change-of-address requests.

### Expanded Content

To provide INS customers with more information, the NCSC's Content Team is working to expand the content offered callers at the first tier of live staff assistance that the customer reaches by completing a series of automated prompts. The goal is to substantially increase the information on general eligibility, the steps customers need to follow to apply for benefits, and procedural questions.

### The I-90 Pilot Program

The NCSC began a pilot program last June in New York City to test the NCSC appointment-scheduling process. With this program, customers can call the NCSC to schedule appointments at the Application Support Center, where they apply for renewal of the I-90 Permanent Resident Card. The NCSC has already scheduled more than 7,000 of these appointments.

### Measuring Performance

The NCSC tracks its performance using a "Report Card" that grades on the basis of such service-level measures as customer satisfaction and the average amount of time that customers are kept on hold at each tier of service.

### NCSC Publicity

The NCSC Communications Team has developed NCSC posters, brochures, wallet-sized cards, change-of-address and other flyers, and bookmarks in English and Spanish. By spreading the word about INS services available by telephone, the NCSC aims to shift some of the service load from local INS offices to the telephone centers, thereby freeing local office staff to handle other matters.



1-800-375-5283	
TDD/TEXT: 1-800-767-1833	
1	Pending INS Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Case status</li><li>2 Address changes</li><li>3 Appointment scheduling</li><li>4 Notices received</li><li>5 Other</li></ul>
2	Local INS Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Fingerprint center information</li><li>2 Local INS office information</li><li>3 Authorized doctors</li><li>4 Other</li></ul>
3	Form or Application Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Form information</li><li>2 Application filing fees</li><li>3 Application filing locations</li><li>4 Other</li></ul>
4	Immigration Benefits and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 U.S. citizenship</li><li>2 Greencard information</li><li>3 Permanent Resident information</li><li>4 Traveling outside the U.S.</li><li>5 Temporary non-resident visa holders</li><li>6 Temporary protected status</li></ul>
5	Special Programs and Recent Updates

The NCSC in January distributed a poster, "The Faces of the INS Team," to better acquaint other INS staff with NCSC operations. An information packet was also sent to the Immigration Information Officers. An accompanying video, due out this spring, will provide "real-life" scenarios on how the NCSC can assist INS customers.

### Coming Attractions

The NCSC intends to expand on its existing services and add some entries to the menu. It plans to offer the change-of-address service, now available to N-400 applicants, to all customers with pending INS applications.

The NCSC staff is continually developing additional content that might better address general questions, including information now supplied by customer service staff.

Automatic call-routing capabilities are now in development that will route customer calls to the next available representative.



# CHILD'S PLAY



## **San Francisco Information Room turns waiting into child's play**

*By Sharon Rummary*

Being a kid can sometimes be boring, especially when Mom and Dad have to visit the INS. Long waits in the information room can be a recipe for fidgety, and even grumpy, children.

But boredom is now a dim memory for most children who visit the San Francisco District's information room. That's because a new kids' area keeps the younger set happily occupied and leaves their parents more relaxed to attend to business.

The new kids' corner is the result of efforts by about 10 San Francisco district staff members. Last October, six employees carried in \$1,400 worth of children's furniture, carpeting, and toys. Then, on Veteran's Day, three employees came in on their own time to hang teddy bears and to complete the decor. More toys and books, many donated by local attorneys who are members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association that sent out the call, have since been added.

The kids' area was the finishing touch to a recent upgrade and expansion of the district's information room, a project that began taking visible form at Thanksgiving 1999. That's when the facility moved from two upstairs rooms into a single ground-floor waiting area that doubled the amount of seating.

Steve Scavo, an architect with the Department of Justice, fashioned an eye-pleasing layout for the new information room, which was moved into what had been a parking garage. The room's high ceilings provide plenty of light and a sense of openness. Soothing pastel colors cover the walls,

accented by nice floor coverings.

Jutting off from the front of the otherwise rectangular room was an alcove, that seemed to cry out for special treatment. And that's where the district's staff came up with the idea for a special kids' area. The results are riotously colorful and a veritable magnet for the little ones.

"If the public likes it, that's the bottom line," said Tony Ju, Information Room manager. The early returns from both the toddler set and their parents are running very favorably, he said.

Typical waiting times at the San Francisco information room range from 30 minutes to two hours. However, the staff has heard a few of the wee folk ask to linger a little bit longer.



# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*



## Orphan adoptees receive citizenship in a time-honored Buffalo tradition



Buffalo District Director M. Frances Holmes distributes certificates to Soulinha Haboon, left, and his two sisters Milane and Lacsana. The Haboons, originally from Laos, live in Webster, New York.



Buffalo District Director M. Frances Holmes greets an especially excited new U.S. citizen. U.S. Congressman John J. LaFalce at right.

They came from 17 other nations, but now call America home. And in a festive ceremony that's become a tradition of the INS Buffalo District Office, 103 former orphans from such faraway places as Cambodia, Romania and Sierra Leone last December joined their new families in celebrating that most cherished of American possessions: U.S. citizenship.

In a Saturday afternoon ceremony, INS Buffalo District Director M. Frances Holmes administered the oath of citizenship to the youngsters in the Niagara Falls High School auditorium, a couple of miles from the city's namesake waterfalls. U.S. Rep. John J. LaFalce, whose western New York Congressional

This story appeared in the January edition with an incorrect photo. It is published again with Ms. Morales' actual photo and our apologies.

## Supervisory Immigration Inspector Martha Morales

*John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York*

### *Recipient of the*

### **JOYCE CHIANG MEMORIAL AWARD**

### *For Excellence In Customer Service*

Forty minutes after midnight on June 6, 2000, on an otherwise typical night at JFK International Airport, the phones were ringing, secondary cases were in need of follow up, and immigrants from three flights were waiting to be processed. Ms. Morales maintained order and provided service that night to regular customers. She also brought forth a new one. In an inspections restroom at JFK, Ms. Morales helped to deliver a tiny three and a half month

premature baby and stabilize it and its 17-year old mother until medical help could arrive. The situation was complicated because the mother was still in labor with a second child when the first newborn stopped breathing.

Thanks to Inspector Morales' speed, poise, and good sense, both babies and their mother are today doing well. Clearly, Martha Morales' care and concern for her customer led her in a direction few of us would ever expect to have to take. Thank you Inspector Morales from all of us for your grace under pressure.





District Director M. Frances Holmes greets a child and her adoptive parents.

district includes most homes of the new citizens, led local dignitaries in presenting Naturalization Certificates, U.S. flags and commemorative mementos to the children. Following the ceremony, the audience of about 500 children and their relatives were free to roam through a

school-sponsored children's festival, whose organizers had asked to host the naturalization ceremony.

INS district offices across the country have presented dozens of similar children-only citizenship ceremonies in recent years, but few communities have embraced the tradition as heartily as Buffalo and the other upstate New York cities served by the Buffalo district office.

On the Niagara Frontier of western New York, community groups and schools vie for the chance to host the ceremonies, often to give real-life substance to the textbook study of immigration's role in American history. Local media devote yards of newsprint and minutes of television air time to news stories that feature proud parents watching their children mark a rite of passage in the immigrant saga.

The enthusiasm for the ritual is due in large part to a community atmosphere in upstate New York cities that more closely resembles a small town than a huge metropolis, according to Holmes. She also credits the region's adoption agencies for encouraging support for the ceremonies among adoptive parents. It also helps that her office has sufficient resources to accede to the requests from community groups, which handle nearly all of the preparations.

"It is show business," Holmes said of the more than a half-dozen orphan ceremonies in which her staff participates each year. "But, it's wonderful show business. It's also good promotion for the INS."

However, change is in the wind for this practice. The Child Citizenship Act of 2000, which took effect on Feb. 27, automatically confers citizenship on foreign-born children once their adoptive parents satisfy the requirements listed in the law.

Parents may apply for a certificate of citizenship or choose instead to apply on the child's behalf for a

U.S. passport, which also can be used for school registration and identification and has the additional benefit of easing foreign travel for families with foreign-born adopted children.

Still, the thought of discontinuing the ceremony may not play well in some parts of the Buffalo area. Many parents of immigrant orphans have said they want the citizenship ceremony, or something like it, to continue, said Karen Eckert, Deputy Assistant District Director for Examinations in Buffalo. Community groups have also weighed in with similar views.

"We've been bombarded with requests," said Eckert, who has participated in the ceremonies for the last 16 years.

An answer may lie in offering a certificate presentation that could include some version of the previously required oath.

The ceremonies have become semi-annual events in the Buffalo area.

The event last December was part of the Niagara Falls School District's Children's Holiday Festival, which itself was a component the "Festival of Lights," a six-week light show extravaganza staged each evening at Niagara Falls that draws thousands of visitors. A summer ceremony has been presented at Buffalo's city zoo.

In addition, the district office in recent years has taken the show on the road for annual ceremonies in Syracuse and Rochester, plus occasional appearances in other upstate communities.

In early February, the office officiated at a ceremony for 19 children in Fairport, N.Y., a town on the shore of Lake Ontario. Fifth-grade students from throughout the local school district wrote essays on what they liked about life in America, with five selected to be read at the ceremony. U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter, a Fairport resident, also spoke to the audience of about 400 persons.

The ceremony can sometimes inspire INS staff, whose work is often consumed in the paperwork of immigration. The ceremony is not just for parents and the children, Eckert said. "We celebrate with them."



Michael Bluff and his brother, Samuel, originally from Russia, take the oath of citizenship with their parents Timothy and Mary. The Bluffs are from Amherst, New York.

Photos and copy by  
Jeffrey Belling INS Buffalo District

# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

## **La Rata scores a hole-in-one for college-bound in McAllen**

Asked on an Immigration Officer basic training test to define the Spanish word "rata" and your best bet is to describe a small rodent that is feared and often branded with a most unsavory reputation.

However, around the McAllen Border Patrol Sector and the Harlingen District Office in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, La Rata conjures up images of golf links and good deeds. In these parts, the words are linked to a much-anticipated annual golf tournament that has raised more than a quarter-million dollars for local charities and college scholarships over the last nine years.

La Rata's roots go back to 1992 when two line supervisors at the Mercedes Station of the McAllen Sector, Jesus Ramos and Adrian Zarate, were approached by the local director of the Texas Special Olympics organization. He wanted Ramos, now a Special Agent with the Headquarters Field Operations investigations office in Washington, D.C., and Zarate, a Supervisory Border Patrol Agent at Mercedes, to help organize a charity fundraiser.

Nine years and countless score cards later, the Ratas Cup golf tournament draws 144 eager duffers from as far away as Washington, D.C. Yes, Ramos remained an active player and co-organizer even after his transfer to Washington five years ago.

"It's something we started that they won't let us stop," Ramos said of his and Zarate's involvement. When Ramos was preparing to transfer to Washington, a court judge insisted that the tournament continue and threatened, as a joke, to issue a warrant to force Ramos' return to McAllen. These days, Zarate directs most of the tournament's local operations, but his friend promotes the cause nationwide among INS staff.

The tournament is scheduled each year at some point during the cool-weather months between August to March. The actual date is determined in large part by when Ramos can secure a week of vacation to travel to McAllen, where he has no remaining family and only one objective: winning the Ratas Cup.



The Ratas Cup rates careful handling from these tournament veterans. From left are: tournament co-founders Jesus Ramos and Adrian Zarate, Noe Vasquez of Salt Lake City, Don and Daren Louck, a father and son team of Border Patrol Agents.

His team accomplished that goal last year and took the traveling Ratas Cup back to Washington for a brief stay.

The cup returns for this year's tournament, which tees off on March 24 at the Valley Inn and Country Club. But, don't even think of writing a check for the entry fee. As in every recent year, the 144 entry slots were snapped up the day after last year's tournament awards lunch. Most of the tickets are purchased by INS staff and law enforcement officers with local politicians and business owners taking most of the rest.

All the proceeds go to local charities. In recent years, La Rata has focused on helping students at selected McAllen area primary and junior high schools in which students typically don't go on to college. The chosen recipient in 1999 was the Vela Middle School in Brownsville, a school conveniently named for Senior Federal District Judge Filemon B. Vela, the man who once suggested issuing a summons as a means to ensure Ramos' return.

The 1999 funds will ultimately provide a \$1,000 stipend to each Vela Middle School student who goes on to graduate from high school and pursues a college or university degree. Stipends carrying the same graduation and higher education requirements await dozens of students in selected area schools.

# INS NEWS *of Note*

## Attention! General's Talk Highlights Black History Month Event

The varied contributions of African Americans to our nation was a theme that rang through the observance of Black History Month at INS headquarters in February.

"We've all contributed to the making of America," said guest speaker, retired Brigadier General Clara L. Adams-ENDER. "Some of us just get more press than others."

In a spirited address, Adams-ENDER offered advice on leadership and life that was drawn from the experiences of her own accomplished career and lessons from the African American experience.

A sizeable portion of humor was included. Black history month came in February, "the shortest month, I noticed," she said.

Adams-ENDER entered the Army in 1959 as a nurse with a rank of private and mustered out as a brigadier general in 1993. During the intervening 34 years she served at various times as chief executive officer for 22,000 nurses, the director of personnel for the Army Surgeon General, vice president of nursing at the nation's largest military health care facility, the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, and as commander of the Army's Fort Belvoir in Virginia.

In the words of another, retired general, the current Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, "She knows her stuff."

And the message that Adams-ENDER delivered to an audience of more than 200 persons at INS headquarters, plus others viewing on closed-circuit television, was that some personal qualities are linked to leadership.

Foremost among these qualities is the need to set goals, which she described as

"dreams that are acted upon." It helps to envision the completion of one's goals and objectives, to picture them in one's mind and to put them into words. This approach helps reduce doubts about one's ultimate success.

The retired general is working on an autobiography entitled "My Rise to the Stars," which she expects to self-publish by mid-year. "I picture myself as a best-selling author talking to Oprah Winfrey and Larry King," she said.

In retirement, Adams-ENDER is president and chief executive officer of Caring About People With Enthusiasm Associates, Inc. of Lake Ridge, Va. The organization deals with issues of health care management and reform, leadership, cultural diversity, women in the workplace and conflict resolution.

Setting high expectations for oneself is another component of leadership, Adams-ENDER said. "Compliments are nice, but it's what you expect of yourself that matters the most."

She also underscored the importance of giving service to others. Quoting the late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm: "Service is the writ we pay for room on this earth."

"It's vital that African Americans continue to make contributions to America," Adams-ENDER said. "We must all strive to make it a better country in which to live."

Acting Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh in welcoming remarks for Adams-ENDER struck a similar chord, pointing to the importance of acknowledging the entire breadth of accomplishments by African Americans.

"Far too many people -- black and white, young and old -- define the contributions of African Americans very narrowly, focusing



Phyllis A. Howard, Deputy Director of the Washington District Office, Introduces General Adams-ENDER

on popular culture, especially sports," Wyrsh said. "We shouldn't let the glitz and glamour of popular culture blind us to the deep and lasting impact blacks have had on all aspects of American life."

"When we broaden our understanding of the contributions of African Americans we will see that black history is American history."



### Speakers at Black History Observance

D. Diane Weaver, Director of EEO Office  
Mary Ann Wyrsh, Acting INS Commissioner  
Gen. Clara L. Adams-ENDER  
JoAn Taylor, Chief of Affirmative, Employment Programs Branch  
Phyllis A. Howard, Deputy Director of the Washington District Office

Appearing in uniform with General Adams-ENDER on the front cover are Aisha Collins and Kimberly Draughn, who are both Junior ROTC members at Cardozo High School in Washington, D.C.



# INS NEWS *of Note*

## Grand Opening of the Puerto Rico Community Liaison Office (CLO)

For several years the Department of Justice (DOJ) has been studying various issues related to the quality of life of employees and their family members who are assigned to Puerto Rico. The House Appropriations Committee allocated funds to assist the Department in addressing law enforcement retention efforts in Puerto Rico. With these funds a contract has been awarded to Zeiders Enterprises, Inc., of Woodbridge, Virginia. The INS Career Sustainment Program was instrumental in developing the Statement of Work. Zeiders will provide CLO services to DOJ employees and their families. The CLO had its opening celebration on February 1, 2001. The CLO works with community members to improve the morale of DOJ employees and their family members by serving as their liaison to the Puerto Rican community on issues, such as, housing, utilities, Hacienda, medical services, employment opportunities for family members, etc.

The CLO provides orientation activities, distribution of welcome packages, and dissemination of information on social, cultural, recreational programs, and employment opportunities. In an effort to learn what needs are important to DOJ employees, Zeider's will send each of them a survey. The results of the survey will be used to assess the types of services to be provided and establish programs and services to meet our employees' needs. This Departmental effort is a major step in our efforts to address the quality of life issues raised by employees and their family members in Puerto Rico.

Cynthia Butler (Center, 2nd Row), INS Career Sustainment Program Manager attended the opening and gave a special thanks to Connie Sanchez (Center, 1st Row), San Juan District ADDM, for her exemplary leadership with the Career Sustainment Program and partnership with the Ramey Sector and other DoJ components.



DOJ CLO Staff  
Sandra Fuentes Program Manager  
Carmen Beaton Program Specialist  
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Sonia La Fontaine Admin. Assistant  
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# PEOPLE ON *the Move*



## Ken Stitt appointed to lead Border Patrol's El Centro Sector

Kenneth "Ken" Stitt was selected as the new Chief Patrol Agent of the El Centro Border Patrol Sector in California.

He was previously Assistant Chief Patrol Agent for the San Diego Border Patrol Sector.

"Ken Stitt brings more than 20 years of distinguished service to the job," said Mary Ann Wyrsh, Acting Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). "His expertise and leadership have been instrumental in implementing our enforcement strategy in the San Diego area and will be a tremendous asset as he takes over the helm of the El Centro Sector."

The El Centro Sector is responsible for patrolling more than 75 miles of international border in southeastern California.

More than 500 Border Patrol agents are assigned to the Sector, double the number of agents on duty there four years ago.

Managing growth is one of the many challenges Stitt has dealt with during his Border Patrol career. As a Patrol Agent in Charge in San Diego, Stitt played a key role in helping plan and carry out Operation Gatekeeper, the comprehensive border enforcement strategy credited with reducing Border Patrol arrests in the San Diego area to their lowest levels in more than 25 years.

"I'm looking forward to working with the personnel in the El Centro Sector," Stitt said. "One of my top priorities will be reaching out to the community to promote even better cooperation and communication between the residents of the Imperial Valley and the Border Patrol."

Stitt, 46, began his career with the Border Patrol in 1977 as an agent in what was then known as the Chula Vista Sector in San Diego. Since then, Stitt has advanced through the Sector's ranks, holding a variety of positions, including Prosecutions Supervisor and Patrol Agent in Charge.

In 1996, Stitt was named an Assistant Chief for the San Diego Sector. In that capacity, Stitt's duties included overseeing key sector activities ranging from field operations to procurement and personnel.

Born on the East Coast, Stitt's family moved to San Diego when he was a teenager. He and his wife Denise have a grown daughter who also lives in the San Diego area.

Stitt will serve as one of 23 Chief Patrol Agents nationwide in the largest federal uniformed law enforcement organization. The Border Patrol now numbers more than 9,300 well-trained and well-equipped officers

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## Portland Speakers' Bureau aims to deliver INS message

A fledgling speakers' bureau that's taking shape in the Portland District office aims to "personalize" the INS' communications with the Oregon public.

The Portland office has recruited 12 of its 15-member staff to carry the message to schools, clubs and just about any large audience that asks for an INS speaker.

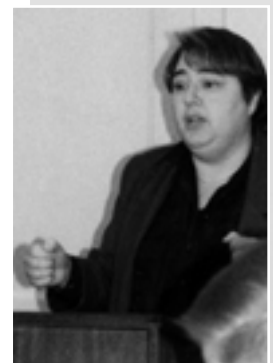
The Portland bureau is modeled on one established a few years ago in the San Francisco District. The theory behind both the San Francisco and Portland bureaus is that the public listens best when the message is delivered by someone "just like

them," a member of the community who is not necessarily the ranking official.

So, supervisors who often take on speaking duties for an office were joined by non-supervisory staff at speaker training sessions that started in mid-November.

The group spans a variety of backgrounds, including a grand parent, military veteran, a 32-year INS employee and someone who joined the staff within the last year.

Even foreign language fluency is well represented. The bureau expects to offer talks in four languages besides English.



Rosemary Sierkowski makes her point during a speakers' bureau class in Portland, Ore.

# **INS** **NEWS** FROM *the Field*

## **Two-year investigation nets 12 arrests for smuggling**

SAN FRANCISCO -- The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California announced that 12 people were arrested the weekend of Feb. 10 on charges of conspiracy, alien smuggling, and enticing and transporting women for purposes of prostitution.

The arrests were the product of a two-year investigation by the INS that culminated in three sealed indictments that were returned by a San Francisco federal grand jury and two criminal complaints. The indictments were unsealed Feb. 12. Altogether, 19 defendants are charged with transporting women both internationally and nationally for purposes of prostitution in violation of Title 18, U.S. Code Sections 371 (conspiracy to transport women) and 2421 (transportation of women for prostitution).

According to affidavits filed in connection with this case, INS agents identified various locations

in the United States, including both Northern and Southern California, where females from Southeast Asia, believed to be present in the United States illegally, were engaging in prostitution.

These cities included New York, Seattle, Houston, Las Vegas and cities in California such as Daly City, San Jose, Milpitas, Oakland, San Leandro, Fremont and Alhambra.

The indictments allege that between February 1999 and January 2001, the defendants conspired to transport women from Laos, Thailand, and Malaysia with the intent of using them as prostitutes.

According to the affidavits, the investigation revealed that the ring was managing brothels in more than 20 cities nationwide, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. The brothels were typically operated out of single-family homes in suburban settings where they were

less likely to arouse suspicion. Some of the women paid \$40,000 to be smuggled into the United States and were required to repay the debt to the smuggler by working as prostitutes in these brothels.

"Smuggling young women to the United States for prostitution is not only illegal, it is unconscionable," said INS Acting Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsh.

The maximum statutory penalty for each conspiracy count in violation of Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 371 is five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 and 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for interstate transportation of women for each violations of Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 2421. However, any sentence following conviction would be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and would be imposed in the discretion of the Court.



**FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO ACCEPTS A MODEL OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY FROM ACTING INS COMMISSIONER MARY ANN WYRSCH DURING RENO'S FINAL OFFICIAL VISIT TO INS HEADQUARTERS ON JAN. 18.**